

and pregnant teen mothers and train young males in responsible decision making.

This week, Planned Parenthood affiliates around the country are sponsoring grassroots events to raise awareness about the need for comprehensive sex education. A majority of voters strongly support comprehensive sex education and want public schools to teach it to keep our youth healthy and safe.

These parents are just looking to Congress to eliminate funding for dangerous abstinence only programs and instead fund comprehensive sex education programs.

#### A TRIBUTE TO THE LATINO COMMUNITY IN HONOR OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

##### HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 26, 2008*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, I rise today to pay tribute to the growing, enterprising and dynamic Latino community.

Today, you need only look at recent statistics to recognize the growing influence of the Latino community.

This year, the Latino population has grown to more than 45 million people in the United States. By 2050, the Latino population is projected to go up to 132 million, constituting 30 percent of the Nation's population.

Economically, Latinos own more than 1.6 million businesses in the country, generating \$222 billion in revenue at a growth rate that is triple the national average. In addition, by 2010, the purchasing power of the Latino community is projected to skyrocket from 600 billion to a trillion dollars. Clearly, this proven work ethic and an entrepreneurial spirit will enable Latino businesses and workers to play an even bigger role in sustaining and strengthening our Nation's economy in years to come.

Politically, Latinos are making significant gains, especially as representation in elected offices at all levels of government continues to increase. Currently, according to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, more than 6,000 Latinos are providing leadership in elected and appointed offices throughout the country.

While I am very proud of the many Latino leaders who are standing up for their communities by assuming important positions of leadership, we must keep working to increase our representation. According to a new report compiled by the University of Denver, the number of Latinos holding public office is disproportionately low given that the Latino population is the largest minority group. The report states, "Very few Latinos have ever been appointed to serve in high-ranking posts or cabinet positions. No Latino has ever been appointed to the Supreme Court. Only during the last twenty years have Latino leaders begun to occupy cabinet positions . . . A handful of Latinos have held such positions . . . Still, the participation of Latinos in the administration is below what should be expected relative to the population."

Without question, the commitment of Latino leaders to equity in this country has inspired all of us to do the work that we do with heart and compassion. I am inspired by the words

of the late Chicana author, Gloria Anzaldua, who wrote, "The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react."

On May 1, 2006, Latinos came out by the millions and took to the streets stating, "Today we march, tomorrow we vote." They kept their promise and in the November 2006 election, the country saw the largest turnout of Latino voters for a midterm election. This November, with the growing population and increased numbers of registered voters, the Latino community will have a vital role in selecting the new president of the United States. According to the University of Denver report, 93 percent of Latino registered voters plan to vote in the upcoming election.

With increasing political clout in the halls of State legislatures and in the voting booth, Latinos will continue to be agents of social and political change in this country.

For example, since the start of the 110th Congress under the leadership of the new Democratic majority, Congress has passed key legislation that directly benefits the Latino community. Congress authorized Recovery Rebates that went out to 130 American households—including many Latino households—to help revitalize the economy. Congress increased in the minimum wage, directly benefiting 2.3 million Latinos over the next several years. Congress increased unemployment benefits at a crucial time when the Latino unemployment rate was at 8 percent. More recently, Congress reauthorized the Higher Education Act, an important piece of legislation that will help many Latino students pursue a higher education.

Under Democratic leadership, Congress has made strides in addressing the needs of Latino families. But we must not rest. This election cycle provides all of us in the Latino community with a critical opportunity to move our agenda forward. With responsive representation in all levels of government including the Executive Branch, the Latino community can better use its leverage to make progress on key priorities. These priorities include increased access to high quality education, greater access to quality health care and comprehensive immigration reform.

As we observe Hispanic Heritage Month, I ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing the growing political empowerment and activism in the Latino community. Now more than ever, we must work together, organize, and, above all, vote, to make our voices heard this November.

#### TRIBUTE TO ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH

##### HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 26, 2008*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. Boniface Catholic Church of Garner, Iowa, on celebrating their 125th anniversary as a congregation.

The history of Catholicism in the Garner community dates back to the time neighboring priests of Charles City, Mason City, and Algona would come together once a month to celebrate Mass and administer the Sacraments in homes and in the public school. On December 21, 1883 the deed for the land,

which was purchased for \$100 in 1882, was recorded. Father Hanley was appointed pastor of Clarion, Hampton, and Garner and had the church erected. It was the first Catholic Church in Garner and Mass was celebrated in the church in August of 1883.

In 1924, a purchase of two more lots gave St. Boniface ownership of the entire block and the rectory was moved to this location. In 1940, a new church was constructed for an estimated cost of \$37,000. While growing as a congregation, St. Boniface Church saw many liturgical changes take place over the years but the community always came together and remained steadfast and united.

St. Boniface Catholic Church is dedicated to benefitting the lives of those in Garner, and for this I offer my utmost congratulations and thanks on a prosperous history. It is an honor to represent all the parishioners of St. Boniface Catholic Church and the current pastor Reverend Henry Huber in the United States Congress, and I wish them continued success, grace, peace and celebration as a community.

#### IN HONOR OF VOCALESSSENCE SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

##### HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 26, 2008*

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor VocalEssence in honor of its 40th season. On September 14, 2008, VocalEssence kicked off its anniversary year with a community concert celebration featuring Garrison Keillor.

During its distinguished history under the direction of the internationally renowned director Philip Brunelle, VocalEssence has become one of the largest and most prestigious choral organizations in the country. Founded by Brunelle in 1969 as the Plymouth Music Series, the choral organization became VocalEssence in 1992, and has steadily grown in reputation along with Mr. Brunelle. Mr. Brunelle himself is an institution in the choral music community, and an outstanding artist. VocalEssence has earned praise for its innovation among the music community by working to spotlight lesser known compositions from all time periods, as well as the work of contemporary composers. By 1991 the organization enjoyed international recording success, as well as international recognition as a leader in choral music performance.

VocalEssence has been actively involved in community engagement in the Twin Cities through programs such as WITNESS, an initiative that honors and celebrates the contributions of African Americans to our cultural heritage. Through concerts and recordings featuring African American composers and artists and educational outreach designed to inform students of the historical role of African Americans in our culture, WITNESS has enriched our community and the musical world, reaching more than 115,000 students in more than 55 schools in the Twin Cities area.

VocalEssence has brought great distinction to the Twin Cities arts community, earning numerous recognition and awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, as well as the Margaret Hillis Achievement Award for Choral Excellence, an